

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants submit this Second Amendment (“Amendment”), together with a Request for Continued Examination and an Information Disclosure Statement Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(b), in reply to the Final Office Action mailed July 1, 2004, and the Advisory Action mailed January 3, 2005.

In this Amendment, Applicants replace the abstract; cancel, without prejudice or disclaimer, claims 16-34; and add new claims 35-77.

Before entry of this Amendment, claims 16-34 were pending in this application. After entry of this Amendment, claims 35-77 are pending in this application.

The originally-filed specification, claims, abstract, and drawings fully support the amendments to the specification and the addition of claims 35-77. No new matter was introduced.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 16-18, 20, 21, and 25-34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent Document No. 63-061,606 (“JP ’606”) in view of at least one of Japanese Patent Document No. 04-143,106 (“JP ’106”) and Japanese Patent Document No. 11-001,105 (“JP ’105”), and further in view of either Japanese Patent Document No. 60-193,704 (“JP ’704”) or U.S. Patent No. 5,529,101 to Croyle et al (“Croyle”); rejected claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP ’606 in view of at least one of JP ’106 and JP ’105, and further in view of either JP ’704 or Croyle, and yet further in view of United Kingdom Patent No. 1,212,795 (“GB ’795”); rejected claim 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP ’606 in view of at least one of JP ’106 and JP ’105, and further in view of either JP ’704 or Croyle, and yet further in view of Japanese

Patent Document No. 11-091,314 (“JP ’314”); and rejected claim 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP ’606 in view of at least one of JP ’106 and JP ’105, and further in view of either JP ’704 or Croyle, and yet further in view of an advertisement in Tire Review (“Advert”) or U.S. Patent No. 5,016,695 to Kuze et al. (“Kuze”).

Additionally, the Examiner stated that claim 24 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

New Claim 35

Applicants submit that new independent claim 35 is patentable under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 over Croyle, Kuze, GB ’795, JP ’105, JP ’106, JP ’314, JP ’606, JP ’704, Advert, and the other art of record, at least because the cited art does not teach or suggest all the limitations of claim 35. Specifically, the cited art—alone or in any proper combination—does not disclose at least a tread band comprising a pattern, comprising: “a central region; first and second shoulder regions; and first, second, third, and fourth circumferential grooves;” “wherein the first shoulder region comprises first shoulder blocks, separated from each other by first transverse grooves, but joined to each other along axially inner ends of the first shoulder blocks by a first circumferential portion,” “wherein the central region comprises: a row of inner central blocks; first and second rows of outer central blocks; and first and second annular projections;” “wherein the outer central blocks of the first row are delimited on axially opposite sides by the first and second circumferential grooves,” “wherein the inner central blocks are delimited on one axial side by the second circumferential groove,” “wherein the third circumferential groove separates the first and second annular projections,” “wherein the outer central blocks of the second row are adjacent on one axial side to the second annular projection and are delimited, on an axially

opposite side, by the fourth circumferential groove,” and “wherein the second shoulder region comprises second shoulder blocks, separated from each other by second transverse grooves, but joined to each other along axially inner ends of the second shoulder blocks by a second circumferential portion.”

New Claims 36-59

Applicants submit that dependent claims 36-59 also are patentable under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 over Croyle, Kuze, GB '795, JP '105, JP '106, JP '314, JP '606, JP '704, Advert, and the other art of record, at least due to the direct or indirect dependency of claims 36-59 from independent claim 35.

New Claim 60

Applicants submit that new independent claim 60 is patentable under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 over Croyle, Kuze, GB '795, JP '105, JP '106, JP '314, JP '606, JP '704, Advert, and the other art of record, at least because the cited art does not teach or suggest all the limitations of claim 60. Specifically, the cited art—alone or in any proper combination—does not disclose at least a tread band comprising a pattern, comprising: “a central region; first and second shoulder regions; and first, second, third, and fourth circumferential grooves;” “wherein the first shoulder region comprises first shoulder blocks, separated from each other by first transverse grooves, but joined to each other along axially inner ends of the first shoulder blocks by a first circumferential portion,” “wherein the central region comprises: first and second rows of central blocks; and a central annular projection;” “wherein the central blocks of the first row are delimited on one axial side by the first circumferential groove and are adjacent, on an axially opposite side, to the central annular projection,” “wherein the second circumferential groove

separates the central blocks of the first row from the central annular projection,” “wherein the third circumferential groove separates the central annular projection from the central blocks of the second row,” “wherein the central blocks of the second row are adjacent on one axial side to the central annular projection and are delimited, on an axially opposite side, by the fourth circumferential groove,” and “wherein the second shoulder region comprises second shoulder blocks, separated from each other by second transverse grooves, but joined to each other along axially inner ends of the second shoulder blocks by a second circumferential portion.”

New Claims 61-76

Applicants submit that dependent claims 61-76 also are patentable under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 over Croyle, Kuze, GB '795, JP '105, JP '106, JP '314, JP '606, JP '704, Advert, and the other art of record, at least due to the direct or indirect dependency of claims 61-76 from independent claim 60.

New Claim 77

Applicants submit that new independent claim 77 is patentable under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 over Croyle, Kuze, GB '795, JP '105, JP '106, JP '314, JP '606, JP '704, Advert, and the other art of record, at least because the cited art does not teach or suggest all the limitations of claim 77. Specifically, the cited art—alone or in any proper combination—does not disclose at least a tread band comprising a pattern, comprising: “a central region; first and second shoulder regions; and first and second circumferential grooves;” “wherein the first shoulder region comprises first shoulder blocks, separated from each other by first transverse grooves, but joined to each other along axially inner ends of the first shoulder blocks by a first circumferential portion,” “wherein the central region comprises rows of central blocks,” “wherein the second

shoulder region comprises second shoulder blocks, separated from each other by second transverse grooves, but joined to each other along axially inner ends of the second shoulder blocks by a second circumferential portion,” “wherein the first circumferential portion forms an axially outer lateral wall of the first circumferential groove,” “wherein the second circumferential portion forms an axially outer lateral wall of the second circumferential groove,” “wherein the axially outer lateral wall of at least one of the first and second circumferential grooves has a profile, in a radial plane, that is inclined more with respect to a centerline axis of the respective circumferential groove than a profile of a facing lateral wall of the respective circumferential groove,” and “wherein the blocks in one or more of the rows of central blocks are separated from each other by transverse grooves having a bottom wall with an inclined profile decreasing towards one of the first and second circumferential grooves.”

Claim Scope

In discussing the specification, claims, abstract, and drawings in this Amendment, it is to be understood that Applicants are in no way intending to limit the scope of the claims to any exemplary embodiments described in the specification or abstract and/or shown in the drawings. Rather, Applicants believe that Applicants are entitled to have the claims interpreted broadly, to the maximum extent permitted by statute, regulation, and applicable case law.

Summary

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

If there is any fee due in connection with the filing of this Amendment, please charge the fee to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A high-performance tyre for a motor vehicle includes a carcass and tread band. The tread band includes a pattern including a central region, first and second shoulder regions, and first and second circumferential grooves. The first circumferential groove divides the first shoulder region from the central region, while the second circumferential groove divides the central region from the second shoulder region. The shoulder regions include shoulder blocks, separated from each other by transverse grooves, but joined to each other along axially inner ends of the shoulder blocks by respective circumferential portions. The central region includes rows of blocks and first and second annular projections or a central annular projection. The blocks of the central region are delimited by, separated by, and/or adjacent to the first circumferential groove, the second circumferential groove, one or more additional circumferential grooves, one or more transverse grooves, and/or one or more annular projections.